



LMHF

Labor-Management Healthcare Fund

WELLNESS WITH YOUR PET Beginning January 1, 2021

“**Wellness with Your Pet**” is a fun way for LMHF members to earn credit toward Part II of the LMHF wellness incentive program. Pet owners know how important and enriching pets can be in our lives. While we are social distancing and spending more time at home, our pets have become a way to for us to maintain good mental health. There are strong wellness benefits of owning a pet such as lowering the risk of heart disease, diabetes and relieving depression. You may sleep better, maintain a healthy weight and reduce stress levels. This is a great way to focus on something positive during these difficult days.

The Health Benefits of Pets

Find meaning and joy in life

Caring for a pet can bring pleasure and help boost your morale, optimism and sense of self-worth.

Boost vitality

Pets encourage laughter and exercise which can help boost your immune system and increase energy.

Here are a few examples of “**Wellness with Your Pet**”:

Dogs

A dog can reduce stress, anxiety, depression, ease loneliness and encourage exercise. Playing with a dog can provide relaxation therapy by elevating our levels of serotonin and dopamine. A walking workout with your dog offers an easy way to add exercise into the day. The greatest thing about the workout walk is that it requires minimal training. Walking is one of the best forms of exercise.

Less Active Pets

The simple presence of a pet at home can help provide sense of security. Pets such as cats, snakes, lizards, rabbits and birds add a sense of fulfillment to a household. They can encourage playfulness, laughter and exercise which help boost immune systems and increase energy.

Cats

Cats can make anything a game. A simple game of chase with you and your cat using a ping-pong ball will keep you both active. Tie a toy on a pole with a string which can be swung for playtime. Toys are excellent ways to encourage exercise for you and your cat and bring plenty of laughter at the same time. Cats can be companion therapy. Having a cat in your home and spending time petting them can reduce the heart rate and blood pressure and help to normalize anxiety.

Snakes and Lizards

Having a reptile that is slow moving and quiet may have a calming effect. These pets can also aid to lower the heart rate and blood pressure.

Rabbits

A rabbit can be an exceptional family pet full of energy and personality. Petting or hugging a rabbit can rapidly calm and soothe a stressed or anxious person.

Birds

Birds are very intelligent. Birds can sense emotional triggers such as anger, stress, tension, and distress and can provide emotional support. Caring for birds encourages social interaction, promoting good mental health.

How to receive LMHF Wellness Part II Credit:

Email a photo of you and your pet(s) involved in a wellness activity for any four (4) consecutive weeks (one submission per week for four (4) weeks).

Include in the email: **your name**, BC/BS Member ID #, pet(s) name, a brief summary of the wellness activity that you and your pet are enjoying in the photo and how it is a health benefit to you. Please sign the enclosed **LMHF Authorization to Use Name/Likeness** document allowing LMHF to include your photos on our website and Instagram page as an inspiration to others.

Four (4) consecutive weeks - email a photo, a brief summary of the activity, and the **LMHF Authorization to Use Name/Likeness** document to

tammy.pudlewski@lmhf.net

Once all four (4) photos and the **LMHF Authorization to Use Name/Likeness** document are received and approved, you will be notified and receive one (1) annual LMHF Wellness Part II Credit.

We know there are more than the pets listed above so please feel free to share your wellness activities.

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